

House Bill 34

By: Representatives Lane of the 167th, Hill of the 180th, Keen of the 179th, Williams of the 178th, Smith of the 168th, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1 To amend Code Section 15-6-2 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the
2 number of judges of superior courts, so as to provide for a fifth judge of the superior courts
3 of the Brunswick Judicial Circuit; to provide for the appointment of such additional judge by
4 the Governor; to provide for the election of successors to the judge initially appointed; to
5 prescribe the powers of said judge; to prescribe the compensation, salary, and expense
6 allowance of said judge to be paid by the State of Georgia and the counties comprising said
7 circuit; to authorize the judges of said court to divide and allocate the work and duties thereof;
8 to provide for the manner of impaneling jurors; to provide for an additional court reporter for
9 said circuit; to authorize the governing authorities of the counties which comprise the
10 Brunswick Judicial Circuit to provide facilities, office space, supplies, equipment, and
11 personnel for said judges; to declare inherent authority; to provide for effective dates; to repeal
12 conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

13 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

14 SECTION 1.

15 Code Section 15-6-2 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the number of
16 judges of superior courts, is amended by revising paragraph (7) as follows:

17 "(7) Brunswick Circuit..... 45"

18 SECTION 2.

19 One additional judge of the superior courts is added to the Brunswick Judicial Circuit, thereby
20 increasing to five the number of judges of said circuit.

21 SECTION 3.

22 Said additional judge shall be appointed by the Governor for a term beginning July 1, 2007, and
23 continuing through December 31, 2008, and until his or her successor is elected and qualified;
24 such judge shall take office on the date of his or her appointment by the Governor. His or her
25 successor shall be elected in the manner provided by law for the election of judges of the

1 superior courts of this state at the nonpartisan judicial election in 2008, for a term of four
2 years beginning on January 1, 2009, and until his or her successor is elected and qualified.
3 Future successors shall be elected at the nonpartisan judicial election each four years after
4 such election for terms of four years and until their successors are elected and qualified. They
5 shall take office on the first day of January following the date of the election.

6 **SECTION 4.**

7 The additional judge of the superior courts of the Brunswick Judicial Circuit shall have and
8 may exercise all powers, duties, dignity, jurisdiction, privileges, and immunities of the present
9 judges of the superior courts of this state. Any of the judges of the Brunswick Judicial Circuit
10 may preside over any cause, whether in their own or in other circuits, and perform any official
11 act as judge thereof, including sitting on appellate courts as provided by law.

12 **SECTION 5.**

13 The qualifications of such additional judge and his or her successors and his or her
14 compensation, salary, and expense allowance from the State of Georgia and from the counties
15 comprising the Brunswick Judicial Circuit shall be the same as are now provided by law for all
16 other superior court judges. The provisions, if any, enacted for the supplementation by the
17 counties of said circuit of the salary of the judges of the superior courts of the Brunswick
18 Judicial Circuit shall also be applicable to the additional judge provided for by this Act.

19 **SECTION 6.**

20 All writs and processes in the superior courts of the Brunswick Judicial Circuit shall be
21 returnable to the terms of said superior courts as they are now fixed and provided by law, or
22 as they may hereafter be fixed or determined by law, and all terms of said courts shall be held
23 in the same manner as though there were but one judge, it being the intent and purpose of this
24 Act to provide five judges equal in jurisdiction and authority to attend and perform the
25 functions, powers, and duties of the judges of said superior courts and to direct and conduct
26 all hearings and trials in said courts.

27 **SECTION 7.**

28 Upon and after qualification of the additional judge of the superior court of the Brunswick
29 Judicial Circuit, the five judges of said court may adopt, promulgate, amend, and enforce such
30 rules of practice and procedure in consonance with the Constitution and laws of the State of
31 Georgia as they deem suitable and proper for the effective transaction of the business of the
32 court; and, in transacting the business of the court and in performing their duties and
33 responsibilities, they shall share, divide, and allocate the work and duties to be performed by
34 each. In the event of a disagreement among the judges in respect hereof, the majority shall

rule, or failing a majority, the decision of the senior judge in point of service, who shall be known as the chief judge, shall be controlling.

SECTION 8.

The drawing and impaneling of all jurors, whether grand, petit, or special, may be by any of the judges of the superior court of said circuit; and they, or any one of them, shall have full power and authority to draw and impanel jurors for service in said courts so as to have jurors for the trial of cases before any of said judges separately or before each of them at the same time.

SECTION 9.

The five judges of the Brunswick Judicial Circuit shall be authorized and empowered to appoint an additional court reporter for such circuit, whose compensation shall be as now or hereafter provided by law.

SECTION 10.

All writs, processes, orders, subpoenas, and any other official paper issuing out of the superior courts of the Brunswick Judicial Circuit may bear teste in the name of any judge of the Brunswick Judicial Circuit, and when issued by and in the name of any judge of said circuit shall be fully valid and may be heard and determined before the same or any other judge of said circuit. Any judge of said circuit may preside over any case therein and perform any official act as judge thereof.

SECTION 11.

Upon request of any judge of the circuit, the governing authorities of the counties comprising the Brunswick Judicial Circuit are authorized to furnish the judges of said circuit with suitable courtrooms and facilities, office space, telephones, furniture, office equipment, supplies, and such personnel as may be considered necessary by the court to the proper function of the court. All of the expenditures authorized in this Act are declared to be an expense of the court and payable out of the county treasury as such.

SECTION 12.

Nothing in this Act shall be deemed to limit or restrict the inherent powers, duties, and responsibilities of superior court judges provided by the Constitution and statutes of the State of Georgia.

SECTION 13.

- 1 (a) For purposes of making the initial appointment of the judge to fill the superior court
2 judgeship created by this Act, this Act shall become effective upon its approval by the
3 Governor or upon its becoming law without such approval.
- 4 (b) For all other purposes, this Act shall become effective July 1, 2007.

5 **SECTION 14.**

- 6 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.